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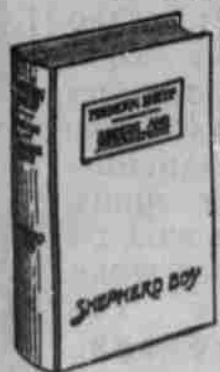
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SOME FACTS ABOUT HORSES.

Prof. Marshall, of the Ohio agricultural college, in a recent bulletin compiled some good points about horses. He says there is about one horse for every four people in this country, and that three-fourths of all our horses are on farms. Different kinds of work require different kinds of horses. A horse is of no particular value except for what he can do. To fulfill his mission he must travel. If he can draw a buggy containing one or two persons at the rate of ten miles an hour, he is valuable as a roadster. Another horse that can draw his share of a load weighing upward of a ton, even though he moves slowly, performs an equal amount of actual work and is just as useful to his owner as the roadster. Since all horses are valuable because they travel, although at various rates and under varying conditions, it will be interesting to make a study of those parts of the horse's body directly connected with his locomotion. It is not difficult to understand that with the horse, as with ourselves, all motion is the result of the action of the muscles. About forty per cent of the weight of an ordinary horse is muscle. All muscles concerned with locomotion are attached to bones, and when they contract they cause the bones to which they are fastened to move. The lower part of a horse's legs are nearly all bones, but the muscles in the body and upper part of the limbs are attached to various parts of the bony construction by tendons and can thus produce a motion of the parts located some distance away. The muscles we are discussing, when contracted, are about three-quarters as long as when at rest. The amount of motion produced by the action of the muscles of, say, one of the horse's hind legs, will depend upon the length of the muscles and the length and the relation of the bones to which they are attached. The commonest idea among students of this subject is expressed in these words: "Long muscles for speed, short muscles for power." We have already seen that a long muscle enables a horse to get over the ground rapidly. A short muscle, however, is not powerful because it is short, but

because in horses constructed on that plan the muscles are thicker, contain more fibres, all of which pulling together when contracted exert a much greater pulling force than a long, more slender muscle. It is because of this that in buying horses to draw heavy loads we look for large and heavy muscles, while in roadsters we must attach importance to the length of the muscles.

The most of a horse's muscle is in the hind quarters. This may be a surprise to you, but the next time you have an opportunity to see a horse pulling a very heavy load study him carefully. You will be impressed with the idea that most of the work is being done with the hind legs. When the hind foot is moved forward the toe rests on the ground and the leg is bent at the hock joint; if the toe does not slip, and the horse is strong enough for his load, the muscles above, pulling on the tendon fastened to the back and upper point of the hock, will close the joint, or, in other words, straighten the leg and cause the body to move forward. It is by the performance of this act at every step that the horse moves, although, of course, the strain on all the parts is much greater when pulling very hard. This will also show the necessity of having large, broad, straight joints and legs, that give the horse the most secure footing. You have probably also noticed when driving that many horses put their hind foot on the ground in front of the mark left by the forefoot, and the faster they go the greater will be the distance between the marks made by the fore and hind feet. This shows that the length of a step is determined by the hind quarters. It also explains the need of large, strong hocks and legs that are not so crooked as to seem weak or so straight as to lessen the leverage afforded by this very wonderful arrangement of the parts. Then there are some other things that are desired in all kinds of horses. One of these is a short back—that is, short from the hips to the top of the shoulders (the withers). From what we have learned of the hind parts we see that the horse is really pushing the rest of his body along. If the back is short and strong, instead of long and weak, the whole body will

move more easily and rapidly in obedience to the force produced in the hind parts. Although the hind parts have most to do with the horse's traveling, we must not forget that the front parts are also very important. No matter how much muscle a horse has or how strong his hocks are, if there is anything seriously wrong with his front legs he cannot travel, and so derives no benefit from his good parts. Some horses may be seen whose knees are not straight, others when looked at from in front show that their feet are not in line with their legs. Such animals are more likely to slip or strike one leg with the opposite foot, thus making themselves lame and unable to do any work.

There are a great many interesting things about a horse which cannot be told here, but which you may learn at home or from some neighbors who keeps good horses. We will, however, say something about horses' feet. Inside a horse's hoofs there are some very sensitive parts resembling the attachment of the finger nail and the finger. When anything gets wrong with the foot, these parts cause a great deal of pain, and even though the horse is otherwise perfect, the pain in his feet makes him too lame to travel. Horses with large, wide feet that are wide across where they touch the ground when you look at them from behind (or in the heels) are not likely to have this trouble.

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